

Message Text

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17

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14 OMB-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /156 W

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R 142355Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7278

INFO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMCONSUL BELIZE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

UNCLAS SAN JOSE 2280

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINR, PFOR, CS

SUBJECT: MINISTER FACIO RESPONDS TO GUATEMALAN

FOREIGN MINISTER ON PRIME MINISTER OF BELIZE VISIT

REF: GUATEMALA 3181

1. PRIME MINISTER OF BELIEZE GEORGE PRICE'S LOW-KEYED VISIT TO COSTA RICA JUNE 4-5 WENT NEARLY UNNOTICED IN THE SAN JOSE MEDIA (HE WAS IN COSTA RICA BEFORE THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR KNEW OF HIS PRESENCE) UNTIL GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINISTER ARENALES CRITICIZED HIS TRIP (REFTEL). ASIDE FROM BRIEF OFFICIAL

CALLS ON ODUBER AND FACIO, PRICE'S ONLY FORAY INTO PUBLIC VIEW CAME AS A RESULT OF A VISIT TO "LA REPUBLICA'S" OFFICES ON JUNE 4 WHERE HE MET WITH THE NEWSPAPER'S DIRECTORS.

ACCORDING TO "LA REPUBLICA'S" REPORT OF THAT VISIT, PRICE
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SAID HE HAD BEEN TO VENEZUELA TO SEEK FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

FOR BELIEZE. HE REPORTEDLY SAID THAT, "IT IS INCREDIBLE THAT
"(BELIZE) BEING A MEMBER OF THE ISTHMUS, WE HAVE SUCH
WEAK RELATIONS WITH CENTRAL AMERICA," AND THAT EVERY TIME
A NEW IDEA ABOUT BETTER INTEGRATION COMES UP THE
GUATEMALAN OBSTACLE IMPEDES IT. "IT IS AS IF A PHANTOM IS
FLOATING ABOVE US CRUSHING US WITH ITS WEIGHT..." PRICE
SAID THAT HE UNDERSTANDS THE RELUCTANCE OF CENTRAL
AMERICAN LEADERS TO RECEIVE HIM "PRESUMABLY OUT OF FEAR
OF ANGERING THE GUATEMALANS."

2. FOREIGN MINISTER FACIO'S REPLY REGARDING ARENALES'
COMMENTS ON BELIZE WAS FRONTPAGED IN "LA REPUBLICA" ON
JUNE 13. FACIO REPORTEDLY SAID, "COSTA RICA CONSIDERS
BELIZE TO BE CENTRAL AMERICAN TERRITORY (AND) CENTRAL
AMERICAN DOES NOT MEAN GUATEMALAN." FACIO WENT ON TO
EXPLAIN THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND REASONS FOR PRICE'S VISIT.
HE SAID PRICE IS AN OLD FRIEND OF ODUBER'S WHO CAME TO BRING
THE COSTA RICAN PRESIDENT UP TO DATE ON BELIZE'S STRUGGLE
FOR INDEPENDENCE. FACIO REPORTEDLY SAID PRICE DISCUSSED
THE POSSIBILITY OF EXPANDED COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH COSTA RICA.

3. MOST OF FACIO'S POINTED REMARKS WERE APPARENTLY
DIRECTED AT ARENALES. HE OBSERVED THAT THE GOCR
POSITION IS CONGRUENT WITH THAT OF THE OAS WITH RESPECT
TO THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF BELIZE. WITH RESPECT TO
ALLEGEDLY CRITICAL REMARKS BY ARENALES ABOUT AN EDITORIAL
IN "LA REPUBLICA" SUPPORTIVE OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF
BELIEZE, FACIO REPORTEDLY REPLIED THAT THE PAPER'S POSITION
IS NOT THE GOVERNMENT'S AND THAT IN COSTA RICA THE
GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WRITE NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS. HE
WENT ON TO REMIND ARENALES THAT THERE HAVE BEEN PRESS
CAMPAIGNS IN GUATEMALA DISRESPECTIVE OF COSTA RICANS
GOVERNMENT, AND ESPECIALLY OF JOSE FIGUERES, AND
"THERE HAD BEEN NO (GOCR) PROTESTS."
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